

VZCZCXRO3302
RR RUEHGI RUEHMA RUEHROV
DE RUEHNJ #0050/01 0191916
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 191916Z JAN 07
FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4799
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHRN/USMISSION UN ROME 0005

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 06 NDJAMENA 000050

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FRO AF/C, AF/SPG, PRM, AND ALSO PASS USAID/W
USAID/DCHA FOR MHESS, WGARVELINK, LROGERS
DHHA/OFDA FOR KLUU, GGOTTILIEB, AFERRARARA, ACONVERY, AMALEY
DCHA/FFP FOR WHAMMINK, JDWORKEN, MLOUSTAUNOU
DCHA/OTI FOR HUBER
USAID/AFR/WA FOR CGARRET
STATE/AF/C FOR MASHRAF, S/CRS JAVANCE
STATE/PRM FOR GPARKER
GENEVA FOR NKYLOH
USEUCOM FOR USAID WANDERSON
NSC FOR TSHORTLEY
USUN FOR TMALY
BRUSSELS FOR PLERNER
KHARTOUM FOR KALMQUIST, KLAUER
ROME FOR RNEWBUERG, HSPANOS
NAIROBI FOR JMYER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [SOCI](#) [CD](#)

SUBJECT: EASTERN CHAD: USAID ASSESSMENT OF INTERNALLY
DISPLACED COMMUNITIES, SITREP I

NDJAMENA 00000050 001.2 OF 006

11. Summary: The USG humanitarian assessment team in eastern Chad is investigating reports of rising numbers of internally displaced persons. On January 17 and 18, the team visited two IDP sites and refugee camps in the Farchana area of Assounga Departement. Recent arrivals at the sites are from villages near the Chad-Sudan border and report increasing attacks on villages by Sudanese janjaweed since last November. While specific figures on internally displaced persons (IDPs) are difficult to ascertain, it is well known that IDPs and refugees vastly outnumber the host communities.

Insecurity in the area has limited humanitarian presence and response to the IDP situation to date. Humanitarian assistance is needed; however, agencies note that any assistance must be carefully planned to assist everyone and mitigate tensions between the host communities and new IDPs and refugees. End Summary.

USG Assessment Team

12. A USG humanitarian assessment team is currently investigating reports of increasing numbers of internally displaced persons in eastern Chad. The team is composed of representatives of USAID, s Offices of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), Transition Initiatives (OTI), Food for Peace (FFP), as well as of the European Command and of the Department of State, s Bureau of Conflict, Reconstruction and Stabilization, assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Ndjamena. On January 18, the team traveled to Goz Bagar and Goundiang IDP sites, approximately 60 kilometers south of Farchana in the Assounga Departement. On January 17, the team also visited the Gaga and Farchana refugee camps.

Operating Environment

¶3. Humanitarian agencies are challenged by a difficult operating environment in eastern Chad. The U.N. Phase IV security status precludes a large humanitarian presence in the area, and the Government of Chad declared a state of emergency in eastern Chad in late November, invoking the right to deny travel permits for humanitarians to travel in the area. Despite the presence of armed militias and bandits in the area, U.N. agencies and relief organizations have not been specifically targeted. The Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reduced international staff in Farchana area by half due to Phase IV security measures. UNHCR has taken measures that would allow nearby refugee camps to be managed for ten days by the refugees themselves in the event of the total evacuation of international staff.

¶4. Access to the Goz Bagar and Goundiang IDP sites is further limited in the rainy season due to fast and high running rivers. Currently, only the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) are providing emergency relief supplies and medical care, respectively, to recent arrivals at the two sites. Also in the area are the camps of Gaga, Farchana, Treguine and Bredjing housing more than 77,000 Darfur refugees. There is a small humanitarian community overall, and no formal coordination structures existing except at the refugee camps.

IDP Numbers

¶5. The number of IDPs in eastern Chad is difficult to ascertain and varies depending on the organization that provides the information. UNHCR and the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) generally agree that the total number of IDPs in eastern Chad is approximately 112,000. However, ICRC and the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) place the

NDJAMENA 00000050 002.2 OF 006

number at around 75,000, claiming that a first wave of IDPs that were displaced last year and were recently re-displaced, are being double counted. That is certainly the case regarding some of 12,000 IDPs that the team visited in Goz Bagar and Goundiang. Approximately 4,000 IDPs have recently been displaced for a second time, having originally moved last May to Borota town from nearby villages along the Chad-Sudan border. According to UNHCR, attacks on villages began in the spring of 2005 following the withdrawal of Chadian military from the area during a rebel advance on Abeche. Displacement and attacks subsided during the rains as rivers became impassable. However, when the rains ceased in late September, attacks and displacement dramatically increased. UNHCR noted that non-registered Darfur refugees, who had lived nearly three years in communities close to the border, have been arriving in Gaga camp in increasing numbers since November.

¶6. Humanitarian agencies note that host communities are not much better off than recent arrivals, and certainly the IDPs and refugees are overwhelming host populations in terms of numbers (for example, at Goundiang there are 800 local and an estimated 2,000 new arrivals). Assistance should be carefully considered so as not to introduce inequalities and exacerbate tensions between the newly arrived communities. The team forecasts a growing number of IDPs, with displacement of the majority ethnic group, Massalit, along the border south of Adre, unless security improves. Agencies note that as the number of IDPs and refugees increase, resources, such as firewood and water, will become increasingly stretched. Specific population data has been difficult to obtain up to this point; the team will continue to pursue the information.

¶7. While the majority IDPs in eastern Chad are non-Arabs, the assessment team also received reports of a limited number

of displaced Arab Chadians. According to UNHCR, approximately 500 Tama (Arab) IDPs arrived in the Mabrone Sous Prefecture north of Farchana. This report highlights the complexity of the IDP situation in eastern Chad, where displacement is caused by a multitude of factors. The team will follow up on this report and provide further information in future updates.

Sources of Conflict

18. The assessment team received consistent reports from IDPs in this region that they fled their villages along the Sudan border in the wake of attacks by Sudanese Janjaweed on camels and horses. Attacks generally occurred in the early morning hours and in some cases resulted in deaths. Reports of deaths ranged from 2 to 13 people. One man said that attackers killed his father and brother in front of his eyes. He buried them before fleeing for his own safety. The key government official of the Hadjer Hadid Sous Prefecture, Assounga Departement, told the team that assailants burned more than eight villages near the border, causing the residents of many other villages to move en masse fearing attacks. According to the official, one of the three zones of Borota Sous Prefecture, comprising 18 villages, is completely empty of Massalit people, the primary target of the assailants. The number of villages that have been burned is estimated at up to 70.

19. IDPs noted that the absence of Chadian administrative officials, both military and civil servants, had contributed to the insecurity. A group of IDPs told the team that the chief of Bakota Canton (chef de canton) asked the village to contribute money to pay for a militia to provide protection. The head of the militia group was a Sudanese Arab, not known by the Chadians. The village refused to pay, saying they

NDJAMENA 00000050 003.2 OF 006

would not accept to being defended by Sudanese as they were Chadian. Their village and several others were burned days later. The chief of the canton had already fled the area. (Note: This information is noteworthy in that it tracks with similar events that occurred in Darfur, particularly in 2004 when villages would pay Janjaweed not to attack. If payment was not forthcoming, the villages were burned. End note). There was a consistent perception that non-Arab tribes were being targeted in the attacks and that the goal was to clean the area, of black, people. IDPs noted that the neighboring villages occupied by Ouddai and Mimi (Arab groups) were not attacked suggesting an understanding with the Sudanese assailants. IDPs in Goz Bagar and Goundiang noted that Chadian Arabs did not participate in the attacks.

10. Some humanitarian interlocutors believe that there is still a chance for local reconciliation in this particular part of eastern Chad because the attacks have come from outside the country and Chadian Arabs are not directly implicated (unlike in Goz Beida where reports reaching the team indicate that Chadian Arabs have been involved in attacks against Dajo and Massalit ethnic groups). However, without any local administration in place, there is little confidence that any sort of peace could be embarked upon and certainly none of the IDPs will venture home without a guarantee of security.

Humanitarian Needs

11. The degree of humanitarian needs of the recently displaced varies according to the severity of the attack on their villages and the degree to which the fleeing families were able to transport their valuables with them or to spirit their goods out in risky return visits to their villages. Some people escaped from villages under attack by armed men on horses or camels that razed all that remained. Other

villagers left in advance of attacks for precautionary reasons, organizing truck or donkey transport to carry sacks of food, seed, and household effects. The USAID team met with displaced families from both categories. While all families lost some resources, including access to farmland, USAID representatives met families in need of immediate humanitarian assistance, as well as others who appeared able to cope for several months. An effort should be made to provide support to the vulnerable of both categories to mitigate tension over stretched resources.

-Food Security-

¶12. In the areas of Hadjer Hadid Sous Prefecture visited by the team, the food security condition of the newly displaced was mixed. Many households visited had clearly been able to carry substantial amounts of food (some huts had up to 9 sacks of millet weighing 90 kilograms each) and other household items, such as cooking pots, with them. Other households stood in stark contrast with no mats and only a pot or two, and no food. These families said they were surviving thanks to the generosity of the host population. Nearby markets are full of vegetables, meat, and other products, but minimal amounts of grain and other basic food staples were available. USAID/OFDA partner Catholic Relief Services/Secours Catholique de Development (CRS/SECADEV) reports that, despite positive national harvest reports, the harvest in this area was below normal due to poor rains. Based on a recent U.N. interagency assessment in the area, WFP is planning a general food distribution, but most likely not until March. Until then, the IDPs will have to get by with their own food stocks and assistance from host communities. Some of the IDPs who arrived before the rains in 2006 planted gardens along nearby dry river beds (wadis)

NDJAMENA 00000050 004.2 OF 006

which still contain water less than one meter below the surface.

¶13. In looking at possible response options, it will be essential to keep in mind the timing of the agricultural season. By May, land for planting must be identified, either in host communities or back in the villages of origin, and seeds and tools support should be in place. If this fails, IDPs will be dependent on food rations at least until the following annual harvest in fall 2008, approximately 18 months away.

-Water/Sanitation)

¶14. Currently, most IDPs fetch water from beneath nearby dry riverbeds. The quality of water undoubtedly is suspect as animals and humans commingle in the wadis at least nine months of the year. Currently, there are no latrines in the two IDP sites. ICRC is having two wells dug near Goz Bagar. A U.N. interagency assessment team visited the area a day before the USG team and reported that only one of the four existing water pumps in Goundiang was operational.

¶15. Unless there is clean water (and sensitization on using it), proper sanitation, a steady supply of nutritious and varied foods, and reduced exposure to the cold nights, children will soon become vulnerable to diarrhea, upper respiratory infection, malnutrition, and other illnesses. If not corrected, the situation will become acute as IDP food stocks deplete and the annual hunger-gap period begins in the summer. UNICEF champions its low-technology, hand-drilled boreholes which private Chadian contractors construct in less than one day near wadis. In locations distant from high-water tables, UNICEF funds Oxfam to do mechanized borehole drilling with Oxfam's two rigs. UNICEF has made an emergency appeal of \$4.5 million to carry on its program for the next three months in locations of the newly displaced.

-Health and Nutrition-

¶16. MSF is providing a mobile clinic to Goz Bagar three times a week and once a week to Goudiang. The assessment team observed MSF in the process of evaluating a tetanus patient in Goundiang. A full briefing by MSF was not possible during the day's visit. A brief conversation with MSF, however, revealed the usual list of illnesses, including upper respiratory infection and diarrhea. MSF works at the referral hospital in Adre and also has a health clinic in Hadjar Hadid. In the summer, malaria will be a severe problem due to the plethora of wadis in the area. ICRC is building a permanent health center at Goz Bagar that will serve both the local and IDP population.

¶17. According to WFP and UNICEF, global acute malnutrition rates in eastern Chad were not above emergency threshold levels prior to the upsurge in displacement. However, no agency has surveyed recent arrivals in Goz Bagar or Goundiang in order to obtain a baseline or to monitor the impact of displacement on nutrition levels. MSF is planning to conduct a nutritional survey at nearby refugee camps and host communities. MSF should be encouraged to survey arriving IDPs as well. As food stocks deplete and IDP numbers increase as forecasted, a nutrition problem is foreseen. Preparations should begin now to build capacity and awareness of the need for community-based therapeutic care and hygiene promotion programs.

-Relief Commodities-

¶18. In IDP areas along the border in Assounga and Dar Sila departements, ICRC is distributing non-food items (NFI) for approximately 40,000 displaced persons. The NFI family kits

NDJAMENA 00000050 005.2 OF 006

include two blankets, one piece of plastic sheeting, two mats, two water buckets, and soap. The Government of Chad is reportedly distributing some emergency items through the IDP fund established by the Ministry of Solidarity but has not been coordinating with the humanitarian community on targeting the assistance. Blankets are particularly in demand to protect families from the cold nights. Still, all humanitarian agencies have told the USAID team that more items are required now and are also needed to meet future needs given the current fluid situation.

IDP Protection Issues

¶19. The story that emerges from Massalit IDPs who fled from Borota Sous Prefecture is that they will not be returning soon due to lack of security on the border. IDPs reported that tensions and insecurity had been building in Borota for months before their displacement. Although the Janjaweed had harassed the IDPs in November firing shots in the air and stealing livestock, they stayed in their villages. The recent attacks resulted in deaths, convincing many people to leave.

¶20. The team came away convinced that unless the security situation on the border south of Adre changes sufficiently, more displacement along the border and further inland may be ahead. No Chadian military are present to deter further attacks. A government official in Goz Bagar worried that the newly displaced, as well as villagers in his area, might be displaced again as an attack recently occurred only 30 kilometers away. A similar sentiment was echoed by a Chadian official in Farchana. The team's bottom line assessment is that the IDPs seen today, due to the fear they expressed and the amount of personal goods some of them transported, are here for a while.

¶21. Also of concern is the vulnerability of children to recruitment as soldiers by armed groups. The UN is anxious to develop activities for children so as to discourage this likelihood, although there is already evidence produced by groups like Human Rights Watch that indicate this is already

happening. U.N. staff in the area have observed young children carrying weapons.

¶22. ICRC and the Chef de Canton of Goz Bagar worried about potential problems that could emerge between host villages and the IDPs. IDPs are currently settled on private agricultural land and the government wants to move them to another site. Finding a site with water is a challenge and so far one has not been identified. Agriculture land and access to water and health services are issues that should be anticipated.

¶23. UNHCR was planning an Age Gender Development Mainstream (AGDR) survey to the area visited today last December. However, the survey was not conducted due to the withdrawal of international staff and Phase IV security measures.

Coordination -----

¶24. Currently little coordination of assistance to IDPs exists in the Assounga Department. UNHCR, the lead agency for IDPs, told the team that U.N. agencies will institute the cluster coordination system to address the IDP emergency in eastern Chad. UNHCR noted that lead cluster agencies will work to attract relief organizations to address the sectoral needs of IDPs.

Conclusion -----

NDJAMENA 00000050 006.2 OF 006

¶25. The findings detailed above constitute the first part of a two-week humanitarian assessment mission, with the team traveling to several additional locations in the coming days. The team anticipates that the complex and differing nature of the displacements in the geographic locations may lead to different response options. More concrete recommendations for the USG response to the situation will be forthcoming upon the completion of the mission.
WALL